



DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE

Citizenship, Participation and Accountability

Putting Citizens at the Centre:
Linking States and Societies for
Responsive Governance

A policy-maker's guide to the research
of the Development Research Centre on
Citizenship, Participation and Accountability

Prepared for the Conference on
'The Politics of Poverty, Elites, Citizens and States'

Sponsored by the Department for International Development
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¹ This document is based on a longer forthcoming synthesis document of the same title, and was prepared by Nicholas Benequista, with input from John Gaventa and Gregory Barrett. "This document is an output from a project funded by UK aid from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) for the benefit of developing countries. The views expressed are not necessarily those of DFID."

An overview of our approach

The Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability (Citizenship DRC) has supported a collaborative network of some 60 researchers and practitioners working in nearly 30 countries. Together they have produced more than 150 empirical case studies, as well as numerous policy briefs, books and articles, on how citizen action shapes states and societies. Taking a ‘citizen’s perspective’, these studies offer a unique insight into how citizens see and experience states and the other institutions that affect their lives, as well as how they engage, mobilise and participate to make their voices heard².

The Citizenship DRC, funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), was intended to support long-term research. It had the objectives of generating new knowledge, disseminating this widely to decision-makers and practitioners, and building the capacity of partner institutions to carry out high-quality research, communication and policy engagement.

This summary note provides a guide to key findings, especially those that link to contemporary policy debates on how citizen participation and engagement can contribute to development, strengthen democratic and responsive states, and help to realise human rights. For each message, reference is made to key documents that support these findings and articulate them in more detail.

Putting citizens at the centre: linking states and societies for responsive governance

Over the past decade, much of the governance agenda of international development agencies has focussed on how to build political institutions that are capable, accountable and responsive to their citizens, and which can in turn develop and implement policies for overcoming poverty, protecting human rights, or extending democracy. Simultaneously, separate donor policies have supported citizen-led approaches to social development.

Our research strongly suggests, however, that strategies are needed which focus on the interaction between institutions and citizens – that is, on the relationships *between* states and societies – in constructing and implementing development policy³. In certain circumstances, citizen engagement with the state can help to confer legitimacy, demand accountability, influence policies, counter elite capture of resources and implement effective services. Putting citizens at the centre, as members of states and societies, is critical for moving beyond the traditional state–civil society divide that has characterised much donor funding and policy.

Supporting Evidence

2 Eyben, Rosalind and Ladbury, Sarah (2006), Taking a Citizens’ Perspective, DRC paper, Institute of Development Studies

Kabeer, Naila (2005). ‘The Search for Inclusive Citizenship: Meanings and expressions in an interconnected world’, in Naila Kabeer (ed.) *Inclusive Citizenship: Meanings and Expressions*, Zed Books: London.

Nyamu-Musembi, Celestine (2002). ‘Towards and Actor-oriented Approach to Human Rights’, *IDS Working Paper No. 169*, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

3 Gaventa, John and Rosemary McGee (2010). ‘Introduction - Citizen Action and National Policy: Making Change Happen’ in John Gaventa and Rosemary McGee (eds.) *Citizen Action and National Policy Reform: Making Change Happen*, Zed Books: London.

Mohanty, Ranjita, Lisa Thompson and Vera Schattan Coelho (Forthcoming). ‘States of Mobilisation: A Comparison of Modes of Interaction Between States and Social Actors in India, Brazil and South Africa’. Synthesis Paper prepared for the Citizenship DRC, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

A citizen's perspective reveals new approaches to building effective states

The research of the Citizenship DRC has attempted to understand how citizens view the institutions that affect their lives, which has ultimately reshaped our understanding of what constitutes a citizen. In our view, a citizen is someone with rights, aspirations and responsibilities to others in the community and to the state⁴. This implies a relationship among citizens, and between the state and all those living within its borders. Taking a citizen-centred approach means putting people as rights bearers at the heart of development and state-building processes. It sees citizens as actors, whose knowledge, voices, and mobilisation can make a contribution to solving key problems, whether in their own communities, with their governments, or in global affairs⁵.

This view is in sharp contrast to many other approaches to development and democracy that understand citizens in passive or responsive roles: as consumers, as users or choosers of state services, as voters, as beneficiaries. While they may be all of these things, they can also play a role as active citizens, as agents of change, who are makers and shapers of their own futures in a number of ways⁶. Such a perspective not only also gives strikingly different views of citizens, it also changes the way state institutions are viewed.

- While a great deal of the literature in both North and South shows a decline in political participation and a growing distrust by citizens of state institutions, Citizenship DRC research shows that citizens do engage, in multiple ways and using many different strategies, though not always through officially prescribed channels.
- While a great deal of international donors' focus is on strengthening states, many of the very institutions that are meant to protect and provide are often seen by citizens as non-responsive, corrupt or even active and complicit in the violation of their rights. This is particularly salient when looking at the security sector⁷.

Supporting Evidence

- 4 Eyben, Rosalind and Sarah Ladbury (2006). 'Building Effective States: Taking a Citizens' Perspective', Paper for the Citizenship DRC, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.
- 5 Gaventa, John and Ruth Mayne (2008). 'Building Responsive States: Citizen Action and National Policy Change'. *IDS In Focus Policy Briefing*, Issue 5, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.
- 6 Gaventa, John (forthcoming). "'Seeing Like a Citizen": Re-claiming Citizenship in a Neoliberal World,' in *NGO Management: An Earthscan Compendium*, London: Earthscan.
- 7 Huq, Shireen (2005). 'Bodies as Sites of Struggle: Naripokkho and the Movement for Women's Rights in Bangladesh', in Naila Kabeer (ed.) *Inclusive Citizenship: Meanings and Expressions*, Zed Books: London.
- Kabeer, Naila (2005). "'Growing" Citizenship from the Grassroots: Nijera Kori and Social Mobilization in Bangladesh', in Naila Kabeer (ed.) *Inclusive Citizenship: Meanings and Expressions*, Zed Books: London.
- Ansley, Fran (2005). 'Constructing Citizenship without a License: The Struggle of Undocumented Immigrants in the USA for Livelihoods and Recognition', in N. Kabeer (ed.) *Inclusive Citizenship: Meanings and Expressions*, Zed Books: London.
- 8 Pearce, Jenny (2007). 'Violence, Power and Participation: Building Citizenship in Contexts of Chronic Violence', *IDS Working Paper* No. 274, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.
- Pearce, Jenny, Rosemary McGee and Joanna Wheeler (Forthcoming). 'Violence, Security and Democracy: Perverse Interfaces and Their Implications for Citizens in the Global South', Synthesis paper for the Citizenship DRC, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

The outcomes of citizen engagement

Attention to the role that citizens play in development and governance is not entirely novel. Over the last two decades, the idea that citizen participation can contribute to improved outcomes has become widely accepted in both the discourses and policies of development institutions. However, the impact of citizen engagement has proven difficult to assess.

The Citizenship DRC research helps to fill this gap with new qualitative and quantitative studies, which are useful both for the depth with which they explore particular country settings⁹, and for the breadth of insight they offer on themes that cross contexts¹⁰. Furthermore, using proven methods of systematic review and meta-case study analysis, the Citizenship DRC has recently conducted an overarching review of 100 of its case studies selected from 20 countries¹¹. After mapping over 800 observable effects of citizen participation through a close reading of these studies, the DRC created a typology of four democratic and developmental outcomes, which relate to the:

- construction of citizenship;
- strengthening of practices of participation;
- strengthening of responsive and accountable states; and
- development of inclusive and cohesive societies.

Supporting Evidence

9 Kabeer, Naila, Simeen Mahmud and Jairo Guillermo Isaza Castro (2010). 'NGOs' Strategies and the Challenge of Development and Democracy in Bangladesh', *IDS Working Paper* No. 343, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

10 Coelho, Vera Schattan and Bettina von Lieres (2010). 'Introduction - Mobilising for Democracy: Citizen Engagement and the Politics of Public Participation', in Vera Schattan and Bettina von Lieres (eds.) *Mobilising for Democracy: Citizen Engagement and the Politics of Public Participation*, Zed Books: London.

11 Gaventa, John and Gregory Barrett (Forthcoming). 'So What Difference Does it Make? Mapping the Outcomes of Citizen Engagement', *IDS Working Paper*, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

In 75 per cent of the cases mapped in the study, participation contributed to positive gains linked to the categories above. However, while citizen engagement can clearly make a positive difference, it can also have detrimental consequences. Positive outcomes were mirrored by negative outcomes, which accounted for 25 per cent of the effects of citizen participation. These included a feeling of disempowerment or loss of agency; the sense that participation is meaningless, tokenistic, or manipulated; the use of new skills and alliances for corrupt or non-positive ends; and elite capture of participatory processes.

Many of the negative outcomes observed had to do as much with state behaviour as the ability of citizens to engage. Where sometimes engagement led to building responsive states and institutions, other times it faced bureaucratic 'brick walls', failures to implement or sustain policy gains, and in many cases reprisals, including violence, against those who challenged the status quo.

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
CONSTRUCTION OF CITIZENSHIP	
Increased civic and political knowledge	Increased knowledge dependencies
Greater sense of empowerment and agency	Disempowerment and reduced sense of agency
PRACTICES OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION	
Increased capacities for collective action	New capacities used for 'negative' purposes
New forms of participation	Tokenistic or 'captured' forms of participation
Deepening of networks and solidarities	Lack of accountability and representation in networks
RESPONSIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE STATES	
Greater access to state services and resources	Denial of state services and resources
Greater realisation of rights	Social, economic and political reprisals
Enhanced state responsiveness and accountability	Violent or coercive state response
INCLUSIVE AND COHESIVE SOCIETIES	
Inclusion of new actors and issues in public spaces	Reinforcement of social hierarchies and exclusion
Greater social cohesion across groups	Increased horizontal conflict and violence

A summary of the paper "So What Difference Does it Make? Mapping the Outcomes of Citizen Engagement" has been included in the conference packet. Copies of the full draft paper can be found at the Citizenship DRC's conference stall, or requested from n.benequista@ids.ac.uk.

Citizen capabilities are a crucial yet often ignored intermediate outcome

A strengthened sense of citizenship and more effective citizenship practices are critical building blocks for achieving broader governance and social development goals. Gaining citizenship is not only a legal process of being defined as a bearer of rights, but involves the development of citizens as individuals with agency, capable of claiming their rights and acting for themselves. Yet in many of the countries where the Citizenship DRC has worked, citizens may be unaware of their rights, lack the knowledge needed to interact with the state, or not feel they have the capability to act. In such conditions, our work suggests that an important first step – perhaps even a prerequisite to further action and participation – is to develop a greater political knowledge and awareness of rights and of one's agency. This is what political scientists often refer to as political efficacy, and the Citizenship DRC research gives insights into how this is gained.

- **Citizenship is learned through action.** Most theories of democracy talk of the need for informed and aware citizens who can participate in democratic life, hold the state to account and exercise their rights and responsibilities effectively. To develop such an active citizenry, however, requires time and experience, which is often gained through action, not simply training nor civil society membership¹².
- **The benefits of citizen action accumulate over time.** With action, citizens learn skills and build alliances: assets that come back into play in the next meeting, campaign or policy debate. Whilst keeping in mind that citizen action can lead to disempowerment or backlash, its benefits more often accrue, such that enhancing skills in one arena can strengthen the possibilities of success in others¹³.
- **These 'intermediate outcomes' are important milestones to measure.** Traditional measures of the state of democracy look primarily at institutional arrangements such as fair elections, the rule of law, and a free and open media – approaches found in various governance indices and democracy barometers. The Citizenship DRC findings suggest a new and complementary standard based on the degree to which a democracy fosters a sense of citizenship. An awareness of rights, knowledge of legal and institutional procedures, disposition toward action, social organizing skills and the thickness of civic networks: all of these indicators point to how well citizenship is developing¹⁴.

Supporting Evidence

12 Cortez Ruiz, Carlos (2005). 'Rights and citizenship of indigenous women in Chiapas: a history of struggles, fears and hopes', in Naila Kabeer (ed.) *Inclusive Citizenship: Meanings and Expressions*, Zed Books: London.

Abah, Oga Steve and Jenks Z. Okwori (2005). 'A Nation in Search of Citizens: Problems of Citizenship in the Nigerian Context', in Naila Kabeer (ed.) *Inclusive Citizenship: Meanings and Expressions*, Zed Books: London.

Pant, Mandakini (2005). 'The Quest for Inclusion: Nomadic Communities and Citizenship Questions in Rajasthan', in Naila Kabeer (ed.) *Inclusive Citizenship: Meanings and Expressions*. Zed Books: London.

Robins, Steve (2005). 'From "Medical Miracles" to Normal(ised) Medicine: AIDS Treatment, Activism and Citizenship in the UK and South Africa', *IDS Working Paper* No. 252, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

13 Friedman, Steven. (2010). 'Gaining Comprehensive AIDS Treatment in South Africa: The Extraordinary "Ordinary"', in John Gaventa and Rosemary McGee (eds.) *Citizen Action and National Policy Reform: Making Change Happen*, Zed Books: London.

Houtzager, Peter, Adrian Gurza Lavalle and Arnab Acharya (2003). 'Who Participates? Civil Society and the New Democratic Politics in São Paulo, Brazil', *IDS Working Paper* No. 210, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

14 Kabeer, Naila, Simeen Mahmud and Jairo Guillermo Isaza Castro (2010). 'NGOs' Strategies and the Challenge of Development and Democracy in Bangladesh', *IDS Working Paper* No. 343, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

Nyamu-Musembi, Celestine (2010). 'Have Civil Society Organizations' Political Empowerment Programmes at the Grassroots Level Contributed to Deepening of Democracy in Kenya?' in Vera Schattan Coelho and Bettina von Lieres (eds.) *Mobilising for Democracy: Citizen Action and the Politics of Public Participation*, Zed Books: London.

Citizen action can contribute to development by improving service delivery

A great deal of debate exists about whether citizen engagement can lead to tangible developmental or material outcomes – especially related to the current focus of development on the Millennium Development Goals. The Mapping the Outcomes of Citizen Engagement study gives over 30 examples of where such tangible positive outcomes have occurred in the areas of health, education, water, housing and infrastructure, and access to livelihoods. But while many approaches to the role of citizens in service delivery focus on their role as self-providers, or on NGOs as providers of services *for* or *instead* of the state, most of these examples present a different path, where citizens engage *with* the state through collective action throughout the service delivery process. Examples range from advocating and pressing for social policies and programmes, to working with the state as partners in the implementation process, to holding the process to account through both formal and informal means.

- **Citizens can be makers and shapers of services, not just consumers.** Citizens can be consumers who exercise their power by deciding where to spend or invest their money, or serve a watchdog function to hold service deliverers accountable, but they are capable of even more¹⁵. The Citizenship DRC's research points to examples of local regulation, co-management and policy deliberations, where citizens are active participants in making and shaping the service delivery systems they depend upon¹⁶.
- **Service delivery is a collective concern.** Even where state or private service providers have implemented complaint systems or citizen charters to empower the voices of their users, these mechanisms seldom leave space for the voices of those who are not served at all. Examples from the Citizenship DRC highlight the importance of collective engagement to convert a development *resource*, which can be taken away, into a *right*, on which people can lay a moral claim¹⁷.
- **Sustained progress will depend on citizen capabilities.** Changing policy or legislating new rights may not lead to reform being taken up unless it is accompanied by new cultures and constituencies for change in the broader policy environment. Apart from winning changes in the letter of the law, citizen campaigns can also alter decision-making processes and bolster the ability of citizens to later hold service providers to account, meaning that gains are more likely to be sustained and more likely to contribute to material improvements in people's lives¹⁸.

Supporting Evidence

16 Cornwall, Andrea and John Gaventa (2001). 'From Users and Choosers to Makers and Shapers: repositioning participation in social policy', *IDS Working Paper* No. 127, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

Coelho, Vera Schattan (2007). 'Brazilian Health Councils: Including the Excluded?' in Andrea Cornwall and Vera Schattan Coelho (eds.) *Spaces for Change? The Politics of Participation in New Democratic Arenas*, Zed Books: London.

Avritzer, Leonardo (2010). 'Democratizing Urban Policy in Brazil: Participation and the Right to the City', in John Gaventa and Rosemary McGee (eds.) *Citizen Action and National Policy Reform: Making Change Happen*, Zed Books: London.

Layton, Michael, Beatriz Campillo Carrete, Ireri Ablanado Terrazas and Ana Maria Sánchez Rodríguez (2010). 'Reducing Maternal Mortality in Mexico: Building Vertical Alliances for Change', in John Gaventa and Rosemary McGee (eds.) *Citizen Action and National Policy Reform: Making Change Happen*, Zed Books: London.

17 Mehta, Lyla, Lisa Thompson, and Ndodana Nleya (2010). 'Claiming Water Rights in India and South Africa', in Lisa Thompson and Chris Tapscott (eds.) *Citizenship and Social Movements: Perspectives from the Global South*, Zed Books: London.

Thompson, Lisa and Ndodana Nleya (2010). 'Passivity or Protest? Understanding the Dimensions of Mobilization on Rights to Services in Khayelitsha, Cape Town', in Vera Schattan Coelho and Bettina von Lieres (eds.) *Mobilising for Democracy: Citizen Action and the Politics of Public Participation*, Zed Books: London.

18 Cortez Ruiz, Carlos (2010). 'The Struggle towards Rights and Communitarian Citizenship: The Zapatista Movement in Mexico', in Lisa Thompson and Chris Tapscott (eds.) *Citizenship and Social Movements: Perspectives from the Global South*, Zed Books: London.

Murlidhar, V. (2005). 'Demystifying Occupational and Environmental Health: Experiences from India', in Melissa Leach, Ian Scoones and Brian Wynne (eds.) *Science and Citizens: Globalization and the Challenge of Engagement*, Zed Books: London.

Kabeer, Naila and Ariful Haq Kabir (2009). 'Citizenship Narratives in the Absence of Good Governance: Voices of the Working Poor in Bangladesh', *IDS Working Paper* No. 331, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

Citizen action can contribute to new accountability frameworks, while also posing new accountability challenges for civil society

While current development debates focus on the role that citizen voice can have in building greater accountability in policy implementation, our research also points to the contribution of citizen engagement to more systematic change, through creating new legal frameworks, mechanisms and cultures that increase the possibility of broader state accountability. While demands for states to be more accountable to their citizens are sometimes driven from above, through donor pressure on national governments, they can also be driven from below, through citizen movements and other pressures that contribute to changes in national legislation. For instance, in India, the Right to Information Law, one of the most powerful in the world, came about from a bottom-up movement, which then linked to champions of change in Delhi¹⁹.

- **Accountability is more than accountancy.** The work of the Citizenship DRC underscores the fact that accountability is at core of the relationship between citizens and their states²⁰. This accountability is about more than following rules or procedures, or ‘counting’ or ‘scoring’ who does what, when and where, though these can be important tools. When combined with transparency and voice, accountability can dramatically challenge the distribution of power and resources.
- **Citizen strategies include informal methods that can change cultures of accountability.** Our research highlights the importance of informal processes and mechanisms that citizens have developed to hold states to account. These informal channels can help to develop a culture of accountability in which citizens and duty holders are aware of their rights and responsibilities, and endeavour to act accordingly²¹.
- **Demands by citizens for accountability produce new challenges for their own accountability.** As demands arise for accountability, so too do questions emerge about who speaks for whom. In some cases, new mediators emerge – such as gangs in the *favelas* (urban slums) of Brazil²² or militias in Nigeria²³ – who appoint themselves as citizen representatives. Understanding mechanisms of representation is critical for assessing the legitimacy of these demands²⁴.

Supporting Evidence

19 Baviskar, Amita (2010). ‘Winning the right to information in India: is knowledge power?’ in John Gaventa and Rosemary McGee (eds.) *Citizen Action and National Policy Reform: Making Change Happen*, Zed Books: London.

20 Citizenship DRC (2009). ‘Backed by Popular Demand: Citizen Actions for Accountability’, The Citizenship DRC Case Study Series.

Newell, Peter and Joanna Wheeler (2006). ‘Introduction: Rights, Resources and the Politics of Accountability’ in Peter Newell and Joanna Wheeler (eds.) *Rights, Resources and the Politics of Accountability*, Zed Books: London.

Newell, Peter and Joanna Wheeler (2006). ‘Making Accountability Count’, *IDS Policy Briefing* No. 33, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

21 Hossain, Naomi (2009). ‘Rude Accountability in the Unreformed State: Informal Pressures on Front-line Bureaucrats in Bangladesh’, *IDS Working Paper* No. 319, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

Paré, Luisa and Carlos Robles (2006). ‘Managing Watersheds and the Right to Water: Indigenous Communities in Search of Accountability and Inclusion in Southern Veracruz’, in Peter Newell and Joanna Wheeler (eds.) *Rights, Resources and the Politics of Accountability*, Zed Books: London.

22 Wheeler, Joanna (2009). ‘The Life That We Don’t Want: Using Participatory Video in Researching Violence’, *IDS Bulletin* Vol. 40 (3), pp. 10–26, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

23 Abah, Oga Steve and Jenks Okwori (2006). ‘Oil and Accountability Issues in the Niger Delta’, in Peter Newell and Joanna Wheeler (eds.) *Rights, Resources and the Politics of Accountability*, Zed Books: London.

24 Shankland, Alex (2010). ‘“We Got It into Our Heads that We Should Do the Job of the State”: The Indigenous Peoples’ Movement, “Forest Citizenship” and Struggles over Health Services in Acre, Brazil’, in Vera Schattan Coelho and Bettina von Lieres (eds.) *Mobilising for Democracy: Citizen Action and the Politics of Public Participation*, Zed Books, London.

Houtzager, Peter, Adrian Gurza Lavalle and Arnab Acharya (2003). ‘Who Participates? Civil Society and the New Democratic Politics in São Paulo, Brazil’, *IDS Working Paper* No. 210, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

Citizen mobilisation can contribute to making rights and democracy real for marginalised groups

Much of the focus on human rights in development is on legal frameworks for the protection of human rights, just as much of the work on extending democracy is on the development of democratic institutions such as free elections, courts of law and functioning parliaments. While these are important, Citizenship DRC research suggests that they are not enough: rights and democracy are made real, time and again, through the claims and collective action of disenfranchised groups. Where social movements exist that can weave together international discourses on rights with local symbols and values, and where participatory spaces allow citizen groups to demand their entitlements, the state often becomes more capable of protecting and enforcing human rights.

- **Rights are made real by action.** Just because a right is enshrined in law, it will not necessarily reach the lives of ordinary people, especially those who are relatively powerless or disenfranchised. Citizenship DRC research shows the multiple ways that citizens have mobilised to claim their rights, including through courts, protests, and global and national campaigns²⁵.

- **Demands for new rights are socially and politically transformative.** The ‘right to have rights’ also includes demands for new rights – to create new norms, laws and covenants that did not exist previously. Our research points to a number of cases where this has occurred, from new ‘rights to the city’ in Brazil²⁶, women’s rights in Morocco²⁷, and indigenous rights in Mexico. Supporting claims for new rights is critical for building more inclusive democracies.

- **Social mobilisation extends and deepens democracy.** Our research shows that democracy is not easily engineered by political institutions or developmental interventions alone, but that organised citizens also strengthen democratic practice when they demand new rights, mobilise pressure for policy change and monitor government performance. When citizens act, they also generate benefits to society that form the preconditions for the proper functioning of democratic institutions²⁸.

Supporting Evidence

25 Mehta, Lyla (2005). ‘Unpacking Rights and Wrongs: Do Human Rights Make a Difference? The Case of Water Rights in India and South Africa’, *IDS Working Paper* No. 260, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

Kabeer, Naila (2003). ‘Making Rights Work for the Poor: Nijera Kori and the Construction of “Collective Capabilities” in Rural Bangladesh’, *IDS Working Paper* No. 200, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

Nyamu-Musembi, Celestine (2006). ‘From Protest to Proactive Action: Building Institutional Accountability through Struggles for the Right to Housing’, in Peter Newell and Joanna Wheeler (eds.) *Rights, Resources and the Politics of Accountability*, Zed Books, London.

26 Avritzer, Leonardo (2010). ‘Democratizing Urban Policy in Brazil: Participation and the Right to the City’, in John Gaventa and Rosemary McGee (eds.) *Citizen Action and National Policy Reform: Making Change Happen*, Zed Books: London.

27 Pittman, Alexandra and Rabéa Naciri (2010). ‘Winning Women’s Rights in Morocco: Cultural Adaptations and Islamic Family Law’, in John Gaventa and Rosemary McGee (eds.) *Citizen Action and National Policy Reform: Making Change Happen*, Zed Books: London.

28 Coelho, Vera Schattan and Bettina von Lieres (2010) ‘Introduction – Mobilising for Democracy: Citizen Engagement and the Politics of Public Participation’ in Vera Schattan Coelho and Bettina von Lieres (eds.) *Mobilising for Democracy: Citizen Action and the Politics of Public Participation*, Zed Books, London.

Benequista, Nicholas and John Gaventa (2009) ‘Democracy-support: from recession to innovation’, www.opendemocracy.net.

Ibrahim, Jibrin and Samuel Egwu (2010) ‘Citizen Action and the Consolidation of Democracy in Nigeria: A Study of the 2007 Movement’, in Vera Schattan Coelho and Bettina von Lieres (eds.) *Mobilising for Democracy: Citizen Action and the Politics of Public Participation*, Zed Books, London.

Gaventa, John and Nicholas Benequista (2009). ‘Reversing the flow – a new democratic conversation,’ *Alliance Magazine*, Vol 14 (2).

Pathways of citizen engagement: different strategies for distinct contexts

Multiple strategies for citizen engagement were often used to achieve the positive outcomes described above. In some cases, citizens engaged through formal participatory fora or councils, such as participatory health councils in Brazil²⁹. In other cases, however, especially where these formal mechanisms were weak or non-responsive, citizens used street protest to claim perceived rights to service delivery, such as in South Africa³⁰, or informal means of demanding accountability from service providers, such as in Bangladesh³¹. In other cases, strategies included legal actions to claim, for instance, rights to housing or to compensation for occupational disease. In yet other cases, especially in contexts where states were weak, citizens used their own local associations not only to deliver support to one another, but also as vehicles for negotiating with local governments.

The Citizenship DRC's research focused on three broad types of engagement: participation in local associations, in formal participatory governance mechanisms, and in social movements and campaigns, as well on forms of action that linked all three. In its first five years, the Citizenship DRC focused much of its attention on formal participatory mechanisms, but subsequently broadened its scope after discovering that associations and social movements were important strategies for change, even where such institutionalised spaces for participation existed.

Meaningful citizenship often starts with associational life

The links between associationalism and democracy in Western democracies have long been highlighted, yet international development agencies have paid little attention to the role of local associations in poorer countries, especially with the growing focus on the role of the state. Yet local, membership-based groups that gather for a common purpose – a savings group in Bangladesh, a group of displaced people in Angola³², or a neighbourhood association in Brazil³³ – can play important roles as building blocks for effective citizenship. In the 'Mapping the Outcomes of Citizen Engagement' study, the highest percentage of each outcome type was linked to associational activity. Associations were particularly critical in weaker and less democratic contexts, where they can play a role of strengthening cultures of citizenship, which in turn can contribute to building responsive states.

Supporting Evidence

29 Cornwall, Andrea, Silvia Cordeiro and Nelson Delgado (2006). 'Rights to Health and Struggles for Accountability in a Brazilian Municipal Health Council', in Peter Newell and Joanna Wheeler (eds.) *Rights, Resources and the Politics of Accountability*, Zed Books: London.

30 Thompson, Lisa and Ndodlana Nleya (2010). 'Passivity or Protest? Understanding the Dimensions of Mobilization on Rights to Services in Khayelitsha, Cape Town', in Vera Schattan Coelho and Bettina von Lieres (eds.) *Mobilising for Democracy: Citizen Action and the Politics of Public Participation*, Zed Books, London.

31 Hossain, Naomi (2009). 'Rude Accountability in the Unreformed State: Informal Pressures on Front-line Bureaucrats in Bangladesh', *IDS Working Paper* No. 319, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

32 Roque, Sandra and Alex Shankland (2007). 'Participation, Mutation and Political Transition: New Democratic Spaces in Peri-urban Angola', in Andrea Cornwall and Vera Schattan Coelho (eds.) *Spaces for Change? The Politics of Participation in New Democratic Arenas*, Zed Books: London.

33 Houtzager, Peter, Arnab Acharya and Adrian Gurza Lavalle (2007). 'Associations and the Exercise of Citizenship in New Democracies: Evidence from São Paulo and Mexico City', *IDS Working Paper* No. 285, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

- **Associations can be schools of democracy.** Where members practice core civic and democratic values, learn about their rights, and develop more effective citizenship skills and practices, associations have in some cases transformed their members, and in doing so begun to reconfigure social relations³⁴. Not all local associations were ‘virtuous’, however, as work on local youth associations, gangs and militias in Nigeria, Jamaica and Brazil revealed³⁵.
- **The nature of an association makes a difference to its democratising potential.** Clearly not all associations have democracy-building potential. Many can represent the ‘dark and uncivil’ side of civil society as well. But for those associations which do have positive social goals, what they do and how they do it matters for producing democratic outcomes. In Bangladesh, for example, research with the local members of six large national NGOs found that the outcomes of membership varied greatly according to the mobilisation style of the NGO³⁶.
- **Associations can recreate social hierarchies, but can also give citizens the confidence to challenge them.** Participation in associational life can serve to expand the sphere of chosen rather than given relationships in the lives of sizeable numbers of poor people. This effect is of particular significance for women, who are far more likely than men to be confined to limited communities of family and kin³⁷.

‘Invited spaces’ for citizen participation require support to become inclusive

Many countries have adopted a variety of techniques and fora that invite citizens to participate in policy-making: local councils, participatory consultations and participatory budgeting processes. Such fora, our research shows, have huge potential to engage citizens, including poor citizens, in debates about public policy from local to national level and in a range of sectors. But creating new spaces for previously excluded groups is not enough by itself to erase deeply embedded cultural inequalities and styles of debate. Citizenship DRC research suggests that such fora help deliver positive outcomes for poor people when three conditions are in place: political will from the state to support such spaces of engagement; strong, legally empowered design; and effective mobilisation and representation by citizens to enter and use these spaces³⁸.

- **The design of invited spaces matters.** Citizens are more likely to be forthcoming with their views if they have been able to shape the rules of the conversation. The success of fora that invite citizens to participate depends on whether citizens are given sufficient ability to define the terms under which they participate, the issues they want to address and the form of the deliberation³⁹.

Supporting Evidence

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Kabeer, Naila with Ariful Haq Kabir and Tahera Yasmin Huq (2009). ‘Quantifying the Impact of Social Mobilisation in Rural Bangladesh: Donors, Civil Society and ‘The Road not Taken’, *IDS Working Paper* No. 333, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

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36 Kabeer, Naila, Simeen Mahmud and Jairo Guillermo Isaza Castro (2010). ‘NGOs’ Strategies and the Challenge of Development and Democracy in Bangladesh’, *IDS Working Paper* No. 343, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

37 Mahmud, Simeen and Celestine Nyamu-Musembi (forthcoming) ‘“Gender and Citizenship” goes local: Assessing the Effect of NGOs’ Grassroots Empowerment Initiatives on Women in Kenya and Bangladesh’, *DRC Synthesis Paper*.

38 Cornwall, Andrea and Vera Schattan Coelho (2007). ‘Introduction: Spaces for Change? The Politics of Participation in New Democratic Arenas’ in Andrea Cornwall and Vera Schattan Coelho (eds.) *Spaces for Change? The Politics of Participation in New Democratic Arenas*, Zed Books: London.

39 Shankland, Alex (2006). ‘Making Space for Citizens: Broadening the ‘New Democratic Spaces’ for Citizen Participation’, *IDS Policy Briefing* No. 27, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

- **Training for new kinds of leadership and facilitation is critical.**

Officials need new facilitation skills to lead a process of this nature, and should be rewarded for these skills. Officials need to develop skills for working with people who start from oppositional positions, especially to work creatively with conflict and not try to deny it or close it down⁴⁰. And they need to allow for multiple forms of expression: both emotional and rational.

- **Participation requires resources.** Participation requires basic infrastructure, like a place to meet, and essential services, such as documentation. In fact, all of the various forms of citizen action – including forming advocacy groups, protests, pursuing claims in the courts, gathering information, petitioning and internet campaigns – also require resource⁴¹. Without support, poorer segments of society find it difficult to participate in these spaces.

Social movements and other forms of collective action are not a failure of democratic politics, but are an essential component of it

While much of the focus of how citizens engage with states has been on institutionalised processes, whether through elections or through other forms of state-sponsored participation, our research points to the important role that social movements, advocacy campaigns and other forms of collective action play in building more responsive, accountable and pro-poor states. In a research volume on *Citizenship and Social Movements in the South*, for instance, Thompson and Tapscott find that ‘mobilisation and social movements in the South have become a key (in some instances the most prominent) form of popular engagement with the state,’ often replacing or supplanting other channels which are deemed irrelevant or non-responsive⁴². Yet donors and policy makers often pay little attention to the democratising and state-building potential of such movements.

- **Rarely do civil society organizations or professional NGOs bring about change alone.** Change usually involves highly complex coalitions which link NGOs, social movements, faith-based groups, the media, intellectuals and others in deep-rooted mobilising networks⁴³. While the state is often the target of such movements, actors within the state also play a critical role, opening and closing opportunities for engagement, championing and sustaining reforms, and protecting the legitimacy and safety of the movements.

- **Mediators are instrumental in framing the demands of citizens.**

Activists and social movement organisations are able to link their demands to existing national or international policy debates, laws or agreements, in order to gain greater legitimacy for their demands, though this is a delicate process fraught with the potential to create conflict and contention among the different actors and between different levels⁴⁴.

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40 Citizenship DRC (2008). ‘Champions of Participation: Engaging Citizens in Local Government’, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

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41 Coelho, Vera Schattan (2007). ‘Brazilian Health Councils: Including the Excluded?’ in Andrea Cornwall and Vera Schattan Coelho (eds.) *Spaces for Change? The Politics of Participation in New Democratic Arenas*, Zed Books: London.

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42 Thompson, Lisa and Chris Tapscott (2010). ‘Introduction - Citizenship and Social Movements: Perspectives from the Global South’ in Lisa Thompson and Chris Tapscott (eds.) *Citizenship and Social Movements: Perspectives from the Global South*, Zed Books: London.

43 Fuentes, Carlos (2010). ‘Protecting the Child in Chile: Civil Society and the State’, in John Gaventa and Rosemary McGee (eds.) *Citizen Action and National Policy Reform: Making Change Happen*, Zed Books: London.

44 von Lieres, Bettina and Laurence Piper (Forthcoming). ‘Participation, mediation and personal change: exploring the role of democratic mediation in affirming participants’ agency’, Citizenship DRC Synthesis Paper, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

- **Social movements can be measured by more than their short-term policy victories.** Often there is a tendency to measure advocacy campaigns or social movements in terms of their ‘policy success’ in the short term. Yet those that do succeed often benefit from enabling conditions: experienced leaders, or coalitions that had been developed in previous movements. Success needs to be measured broadly, not just in terms of narrow policy wins, and over longer periods of time⁴⁵.

Supporting Evidence

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45 Robins, Steve (2005) ‘AIDS, Science and Citizenship after Apartheid’, in Melissa Leach, Ian Scoones and Brian Wynne (eds.) *Science and Citizens: Globalization and the Challenge of Engagement*, Zed Books: London.

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Icaza, Rosalba, Peter Newell and Marcelo Saguier (2010). ‘Citizenship and Trade Governance in the America’, in John Gaventa and Rajesh Tandon (eds.) *Globalizing Citizens: New Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion*, Zed Books: London.

MEASURING CAMPAIGN SUCCESS		
	TANGIBLE	INTANGIBLE
NATIONAL	Change of policy/legal system	New patterns of decision-making and participation
INTERMEDIATE	Better programme implementation	Greater government accountability and capability
LOCAL	Material improvement in quality of life	Sense of citizenship and capabilities to claim rights

From Gaventa, John (2008). 'Building Responsive States: Citizen Action and National Policy Change', *IDS In Focus Policy Briefing* No. 5, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

Supporting Evidence

46 Moncrieffe, Joy (2008). 'Making and Unmaking the Young "Shotta" [Shooter]: Boundaries and (Counter)-Actions in the "Garrisons"', *IDS Working Paper* No. 297, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

47 Roque, Sandra and Alex Shankland (2007) 'Participation, Mutation and Political Transition: New Democratic Spaces in Peri-urban Angola', in Andrea Cornwall and Vera Schattan Coelho (eds.) *Spaces for Change? The Politics of Participation in New Democratic Arenas*, Zed Books: London.

48 Pearce, Jenny (2007). 'Violence, Power and Participation: Building Citizenship in Contexts of Chronic Violence', *IDS Working Paper* No. 274, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

49 Hilker, L., Nicholas Benequista and Gregory Barrett (2010). 'Broadening Spaces for Citizens in Violent Contexts', *Citizenship DRC Policy Briefing*

The fragilities of citizenship in different settings

Throughout the work of the Citizenship DRC, we have been reminded of the dark and uncivil side of civil society. The solidarities of citizenship can be inclusionary, but also exclusionary, in the form of ethnic or communal violence. Civil society actors include militias, gangs, or drug lords, who while they may in some ways give benefits to local citizens, also use violence and force to exercise parallel and unaccountable power. Citizenship, understood as the ability to exercise voice and claim rights from states and political authorities, is itself fragile: not easily gained, and often set back, co-opted or diminished.

Violence and insecurity contribute to a fragility of citizenship in many settings

There is a growing emphasis in the international donor community on the forms of violence found in the so-called "fragile" or "conflict-affected" states. Yet violence – or the threat of it – is an everyday reality for people across the world, including in states considered to be relatively "effective" in delivering rights and resources to their citizens. Whether in the favelas of Brazil, the garrisons of Jamaica⁴⁶, or the peri-urban areas of Angola⁴⁷, the fear and mistrust that result from violence limit people's perception of their political community. In turn, they contribute to a fragility of citizenship on various levels, with direct consequences for the quality of democratic governance⁴⁸.

- **State actors can be a source of security and insecurity.** That states often fail to provide adequate security for citizens or undermine democratic governance through acts committed in the name of security calls into question top-down approaches to reducing violence⁴⁹ State actors may protect some sectors, while tolerating or even perpetrating violence against others. It is imperative that policy-makers design specific strategies for coping with state-sponsored violence, and to address the consequences of state failure to provide security.

- Citizens adopt a range of strategies to cope with, respond to or resist violence and those who perpetrate it. In violent settings, citizens pursue strategies that include withdrawal into partial citizenship or self-censorship, peaceful coexistence with violent actors, and establishing parallel governance or security structures⁵⁰. These strategies and alternatives are not necessarily benign. They can have both positive and negative consequences for citizens, their democratic participation and levels of violence in their communities.

- **Participatory and action research can help to identify local strategies.** External actors can help to broaden spaces for citizens to take action in non-violent, socially legitimate ways that complement state-led initiatives, but they must first gain locally nuanced understanding. Participatory and action research methods can be very effective to elicit citizens' local knowledge, to raise awareness and to identify existing, but often unrecognised, associations that can provide a building-block for citizen engagement with a newly democratising state⁵¹.

Supporting Evidence

50 Pearce, Jenny and Rosemary McGee (eds.) (2009). 'Violence, Social Action and Research', *IDS Bulletin* Vol. 40 (3), Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

51 Pearce, Jenny, Rosemary McGee and Joanna Wheeler (Forthcoming). 'Violence, Security and Democracy: Perverse Interfaces and Their Implications for Citizens in the Global South', *Citizenship DRC Synthesis Paper*, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

Lessons for putting citizens at the centre

While the previous sections focus on the outcomes of citizen engagement, much of the work of the Citizenship DRC has focused on the dynamics of engagement and the conditions under which change occurs. Here, too, important lessons emerge.

Work both sides of the equation

Despite the contribution of citizen engagement to building an informed citizenry, delivering development outcomes, strengthening accountability, and extending human rights, citizens do not do this alone. ‘Working both sides of the equation’ means recognising the critical role that reforms and reformers within states play as well. Working at the intersection of state and society, however, still runs counter to the approaches of many development actors. Donor agencies are often divided between governance divisions – which focus on states – and civil society or social development divisions, which focus on social relations outside of the state. Civil society actors often focus on building voice, without developing links with champions of change inside the state; while state reformers may also fail to build links to citizens in reform processes.

- **Champions of change within the state open the doors for citizen engagement.** Many times, such champions emerge as result of elections or internal competitions for political power. A series of workshops with champions of participation around the world point to the multiple strategies that those within the system use in creating and supporting spaces for civic engagement, and the many challenges that they face⁵².

- **Effective reform comes from alliances between champions inside the state and social actors on the outside.** A series of eight case studies of significant pro-poor national policy reforms demonstrates that these have come about due to significant broad based alliances between civil society organisations, the media, intellectuals, and state reformers⁵³. While reformers can create political opportunities for action, organised citizens can also create opportunities and pressure for state reformers to bring about change.

- **Every state has a unique relationship with its citizens.** Research that compares experiences in Brazil, India and South Africa, demonstrates how ‘modes of interaction’ may differ for historical and cultural reasons, regardless of the similarities between the three countries as large democracies with relatively well-organised civil societies. Understanding such differences is crucial for designing context-appropriate programmes⁵⁴.

Supporting Evidence

52 Gaventa, John (2004). ‘Towards Participatory Governance: Assessing the Transformative Possibilities’, in Sam Hickey and Giles Mohan (eds.) *From Tyranny to Transformation: exploring new approaches to participation in development*, Zed Books: London.

http://www.drc-citizenship.org/news%20and%20events/2010/hampions_and_pioneers.htm

53 Gaventa, John (2008). ‘Building Responsive States: Citizen Action and National Policy Change’, *IDS In Focus Policy Briefing* No. 5, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

Borras Jr., Saturnino and Jennifer Franco (2010). ‘Redistributing Land in the Philippines: Social Movements and State Reforms’, in John Gaventa and Rosemary McGee (eds.) *Citizen Action and National Policy Reform: Making Change Happen*, Zed Books: London.

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54 Mohanty, Ranjita, Lisa Thompson and Vera Schattan Coelho (Forthcoming). ‘States of Mobilisation: A Comparison of Modes of Interaction Between States and Social Actors in India, Brazil and South Africa’, Citizenship DRC Synthesis Paper, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

New tiers of governance, from the local to the global, pose challenges and opportunities for citizens

Decisions at the international level – whether by multilateral institutions like the World Bank or non-state actors like the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria⁵⁵ – affect what states and citizens can do. Yet conversely, local and national actors can also appeal to international authority and use international pressures to bring about change at home. Citizen-state interactions are not just a local matter.

- **International frameworks and norms have two sides.** A number of Citizenship DRC studies illustrate the importance of international frameworks, covenants and norms, but appeals to these frameworks and pressure from international groups can also raise concern about ‘outside interference’, thus undermining the local legitimacy of citizen voice⁵⁶.
- **Inter-mediators are crucial.** International institutions that seek to engage citizens ‘from above’ may find their efforts to hear new voices thwarted or captured for different purposes if they do not link effectively to local and national mediating organisations as well. Building links from the global to the local, or vice versa, depends very much on effective mediators⁵⁷.
- **The globalisation of authority poses new challenges for donors, activists and policy makers to think ‘vertically’.** The organisation of many international governmental, donor and civil society agencies – which is often layered in separate global, national and local offices or programmes – does little to encourage thinking about how to support vertical alliances for change. Success must be understood not only in terms of change at one level, but in terms of its consequences for power and inclusion in other interconnected arenas as well⁵⁸.

Supporting Evidence

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56 Gaventa, John and Rosemary McGee (2010). ‘Introduction – Citizen Action and National Policy: Making Change Happen’ in John Gaventa and Rosemary McGee (eds.) *Citizen Action and National Policy Reform: Making Change Happen*, Zed Books: London.

57 Cassidy, Rebecca and Melissa Leach (2009). ‘AIDS, Citizenship and Global Funding: A Gambian Case Study’, *IDS Working Paper* No. 325, Institute of Development Studies: Brighton.

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58 Gaventa, John and Rajesh Tandon (2010) ‘Introduction – Globalizing Citizenship?’ in John Gaventa and Rajesh Tandon (eds.) *Globalizing Citizens: New Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion*, Zed Books: London.

Research processes can contribute to long-term change

The incidence of negative outcomes from citizen engagement suggests that far more work is needed to understand how factors influence the outcomes of citizenship engagement in different contexts. After two decades of support for citizen engagement in international development, the challenge is not simply to understand what difference citizen engagement makes, but also to understand the quality and direction of the differences that are made, and how they are attained.

At the same time, 10 years of research by the Citizenship DRC has taught us a great deal about how to research citizenship, and ways of working so that citizenship research itself contributes to knowledge, informs citizen action and policy, and creates capacities and partnerships. Research itself can be a form of building citizen awareness and citizen action⁵⁹.

- Working iteratively in teams that bridge countries, disciplines and sectors (academic, NGO, public) has taught us valuable lessons about how to build multi-stakeholder and transnational partnerships to solve global issues⁶⁰;
- Using interactive, participatory and multiple forms of communication has given us insight into how to use knowledge to influence policy and practice⁶¹;
- Using our research to develop new curricula, training modules and training programmes for university students, activists and public officials has taught us a great deal about using knowledge for learning and capacity building.

The final phase of our synthesis work, currently ongoing, will reflect upon and document lessons from ten years of 'researching citizenship' which be used for future research programmes.

Supporting Evidence

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